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EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.
2. Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mr Gregory D. Leibold on June 17, 2009.
3. The applicant has been amended as follow:
 1. (Currently Amended) A system for identifying principals within a computing environment, the system comprising: one or more processing units; at least one memory including instructions that, when executed by the one or more processors, create a system comprising: a plurality of principal objects, wherein each principal object corresponds to a specific principal authenticated to perform a digital action within the computing environment and wherein each principal object is operable for use by a computer process within the computing environment to associate a plurality of resource objects with the specific principal corresponding to the principal object; a plurality of identity claims, wherein each identity claim uniquely identifies the specific principal

corresponding to each specific principal object, and wherein at least one of the plurality of principal objects comprises two or more identity claims each uniquely identifying the specific principal corresponding to the at least one principal object; and a plurality of identity references, wherein each of the plurality of identity references comprise at least part of one of the resource objects within the computing environment, and wherein each of the plurality of identity references identifies its associated resource object as being associated with a specific principal based on a link assertion within the identity reference to a specific identity claim [[.]]; wherein each of the plurality of identity claims comprises a type assertion and a value assertion that collectively identify the specific principal corresponding to the principal object to which each of the identity claims are associated; wherein the link assertion within each of the plurality of the identity references comprises the type assertion and the value assertion specified in the specific identity claim to which each identity reference is linked.

2-4.(Canceled)

5.(Original) A system as defined in claim [[4]] 1_ wherein a first type assertion for a first identity claim associated with a first principal object indicates that the value assertion in the first identity claim comprises an electronic mail address uniquely associated with a first principal corresponding to the first principal object.

6.(Original) A system as defined in claim 5, wherein the first identity claim further comprises a start time reference assertion indicating a point in time when the email address was initially associated with the first principal.

7.(Original) A system as defined in claim 6, wherein the first identity claim further comprises an end time reference assertion indicating a point in time when the association between the email address and the first principal lapses.

8. (Original) A system as defined in claim[[4]] 1, wherein a second type assertion for a second identity claim associated with the first principal object indicates that the value assertion in the second identity claim comprises a telephone number uniquely associated with the first principal.

9.(Original) A system as defined in claim [[2]] 1, wherein the computing environment is a distributed computing system, and wherein at least one identity reference is maintained on a computer system different than a computer system on which the identity claim linked to the identity reference is maintained.

10 - 27 (Cancelled).

28. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method for identifying a first principal authenticated to perform a digital action within a computing environment including at least a first computer system, the method comprising: creating, by the first computer system, a principal object operable for use by a computer process within the computing environment to identify the first principal as being associated with a plurality of resource objects maintained within the computing environment; associating with the principal object a first identity claim uniquely identifying the first principal within a particular identification scheme, wherein unique identification of the first principal within the particular identification scheme is accomplished by assignment of unique identification strings to each of a plurality of principals; receiving a plurality of resource objects associated with a plurality of application programs, wherein each of the plurality of resource objects comprise an identity reference comprising a declaration that

links each resource object to the principal object; identifying within the computing environment each of the plurality of resource objects as being associated with the first principal based on the declaration links contained in the associated identity references, wherein the computer process utilizes identification of each of the plurality of resource objects to the first principal to perform at least one task in connection with each identified resource object; and creating a phantom principal object in response to receiving a resource object having a identity reference comprising a declaration that does not link the resource object to the principal object, the declaration comprising an identification string uniquely identifying a second principal within the particular identification scheme, and wherein the phantom principal object is created to include the identification string assigned to the second principal, wherein the resource object is associated with the phantom principal object; saving the phantom principal object to a data store containing the principal object corresponding to the first principal; receiving a new principal object; and replacing the phantom principal object with the new principal object.

29.(Original) A method as defined in claim 28, wherein the receiving act comprises: receiving a first resource object having associated therewith a first identity reference linked to the first identity claim based on a first declaration comprising a unique identification string assigned to the first principal, wherein the first resource object represents a first file associated with a first application program; and receiving a second resource object having associated therewith a second identity reference linked to the first identity claim based on a second declaration comprising the unique identification string assigned to the first principal, wherein the second resource object represents a second file associated with a second application program.

30.(Original) A method as defined in claim 29, wherein the identifying act comprises:

identifying the first file and the second file as being associated with the first principal based on the linking of the first identity reference and the second identity reference to the first identity claim.

31. (Original) A method as defined in claim 28, further comprising: associating with the principal object properties associated with the first principal, wherein the task performed by the computer process in response to the identifying act comprises an act of displaying a graphical representation of the properties associated with the first principal in conjunction with a graphical representation of at least one of the plurality of resources linked to the principal object.

32. (Original) A method as defined in claim 30, further comprising: associating with the principal object properties associated with the first principal, wherein the task performed by the computer process in response to the identifying act comprises an act of authenticating access by the first principal to at least one of the plurality of resources linked to the principal object.

33. (Canceled)

34. (Previously Presented) A method as defined in claim 28, further comprising: receiving a second principal object, wherein the second principal object comprises a second identity claim that comprises the identification string assigned to the second principal; and in response to determining that the phantom principal object and the second principal both correspond to the second principal, deleting the phantom principal object from the data store and saving to the data store the second principal object such that the second principal object is operable for use by the identifying act.

35. (Original) A method as defined in claim 28, wherein the first identity claim is stored in the computing environment in a data store, the method further comprising: in response to receiving a

second identity claim for storage into the data store, determining whether the second identity claim and the first identity claim both specify an identical unique identification string; and in response to determining that both the first identity claim and the second identity claim specify the identical unique identification string, invoking a fault resolution process to determine a primary identity claim that is to be stored in the data store and available to the identifying act.

36.(Original) A method as defined in claim 35, wherein the invoking act comprises: merging data stored in the second identity claim into the first identity claim.

37.(Original) A method as defined in claim 35, wherein the invoking act comprises: deleting the first identity claim; and storing in the data store the second identity claim.

38. (Canceled)

39. (Currently Amended) A computer storage medium encoding computer readable instructions that when executed perform a method for identifying a first principal authenticated to perform a digital action within a computing environment, the method comprising: creating a principal object operable for use by a computer process within the computing environment to identify the first principal as being associated with a plurality of resource objects maintained within the computing environment; associating with the principal object a first identity claim uniquely identifying the first principal within a particular identification scheme, wherein unique identification of the first principal within the particular identification scheme is accomplished by assignment of unique identification strings to each of a plurality of principals; receiving a plurality of resource objects associated with a plurality of application programs, wherein each of the plurality of resource objects comprise an identity reference comprising a declaration that links each resource object to the principal object; identifying within the computing environment

each of the plurality of resource objects as being associated with the first principal based on the declaration links contained in the associated identity references, wherein the computer process utilizes identification of each of the plurality of resource objects to the first principal to perform at least one task in connection with each identified resource object[.]; wherein the receiving act comprises: receiving a first resource object having associated therewith a first identity reference linked to the first identity claim based on a first declaration comprising a unique identification string assigned to the first principal, wherein the first resource object represents a first file associated with a first application program; and receiving a second resource object having associated therewith a second identity reference linked to the first identity claim based on a second declaration comprising the unique identification string assigned to the first principal, wherein the second resource object represents a second file associated with a second application program.

40. (Cancelled).

41. (Original) A method as defined in claim [[40]] 39, wherein the identifying act comprises identifying the first file and the second file as being associated with the first principal based on the linking of the first identity reference and the second identify reference to the first identity claim.

42. (Original) A method as defined in claim 39, further comprising: associating with the principal object properties associated with the first principal, wherein the task performed by the computer process in response to the identifying act comprises an act of displaying a graphical

representation of the properties associated with the first principal in conjunction with a graphical representation of at least one of the plurality of resources linked to the principal object.

43. (Original) A method as defined in claim 41, further comprising: associating with the principal object properties associated with the first principal, wherein the task performed by the computer process in response to the identifying act comprises an act of authenticating access by the first principal to at least one of the plurality of resources linked to the principal object.

44. (Original) A method as defined in claim 39, wherein the first identity claim is stored in the computing environment in a data store, the method further comprising: in response to receiving a second identity claim for storage into the data store, determining whether the second identity claim and the first identity claim both specify an identical unique identification string; and in response to determining that both the first identity claim and the second identity claim specify the identical unique identification string, invoking a fault resolution process to determine a primary identity claim that is to be stored in the data store and available to the identifying act.

45. (Original) A method as defined in claim 44, wherein the invoking act comprises: merging data stored in the second identity claim into the first identity claim.

46. (Original) A method as defined in claim 44, wherein the invoking act comprises: deleting the first identity claim; and storing in the data store the second identity claim.

47. (Original) A method as defined in claim 39, wherein each of the plurality of identity claims comprises a type assertion and a value assertion that collectively identify the specific principal corresponding to the principal object to which each of the identity claims are associated.

48. (Original) A method as defined in claim 47, wherein the link assertion within each of the plurality of the identity references comprises the type assertion and the value assertion specified in the specific identity claim to which each identity reference is linked.

49. (Original) A method as defined in claim 48, wherein a first type assertion for a first identity claim associated with a first principal object indicates that the value assertion in the first identity claim comprises an electronic mail address uniquely associated with a first principal corresponding to the first principal object.

4. Following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

5. With respect to claims 1, 5-9, 28-32, 34-37, 39, and 41-49 the prior art of record, individually or in combination, fails to teach, suggest or render obvious the claimed invention in combination with specific amended limitations as recited in claims 1, and 39.

6. Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Tammy T. Nguyen whose telephone number is 571-272- 3929. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday 8:30 - 5:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, *William Vaughn* can be reached on 571-272-3922. The fax phone number for the

organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/THANH TAMMY NGUYEN/

Primary Examiner, Art Unit 2444